



NEWS RELEASE



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Occupational Employment and Wages in Chattanooga, May 2013

Workers in the Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$19.29 in May 2013, about 14 percent below the nationwide average of \$22.33, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were significantly lower than their respective national averages in 19 of the 22 major occupational groups, including management, sales and related, and building and grounds cleaning and maintenance.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 5 of the 22 occupational groups, including transportation and material moving, production, and healthcare practitioners and technical. Conversely, 11 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including business and financial operations; sales and related; and education, training, and library. (See [table A](#) and box note at end of release.)

One occupational group—transportation and material moving—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Chattanooga had 23,650 jobs in transportation and material moving, accounting for 10.4 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 6.8-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$14.42, measurably below the national wage of \$16.28.

With employment of 4,650, heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers was one of the largest occupations within the transportation and material moving group, as were hand laborers and freight, stock, and material movers (4,620) and hand packers and packagers (1,150). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of transportation and material-moving machine and vehicle operators and heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, with mean hourly wages of \$24.01 and \$18.50, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were hand packers and packagers (\$9.48) and cleaners of vehicles and equipment (\$10.45). (Detailed occupational data for transportation and material moving are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_16860.htm.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2013

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Chattanooga	United States	Chattanooga	Percent difference ¹
Total, all occupations	100.0%	100.0%	\$22.33	\$19.29*	-14
Management	4.9	5.3*	53.15	43.80*	-18
Business and financial operations.....	5.0	3.5*	34.14	29.89*	-12
Computer and mathematical	2.8	1.4*	39.43	33.40*	-15
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.9	38.51	37.13	-4
Life, physical, and social science	0.9	0.4*	33.37	30.23*	-9
Community and social services.....	1.4	1.0*	21.50	18.59*	-14
Legal	0.8	0.5*	47.89	38.61*	-19
Education, training, and library.....	6.3	5.2*	24.76	21.56*	-13
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media.....	1.3	0.9*	26.72	19.78*	-26
Healthcare practitioner and technical.....	5.8	7.6*	35.93	33.04*	-8
Healthcare support.....	3.0	2.8	13.61	13.40	-2
Protective service.....	2.5	2.3	20.92	16.22*	-22
Food preparation and serving related	9.0	8.7	10.38	9.21*	-11
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.2	3.6	12.51	10.51*	-16
Personal care and service.....	3.0	2.2*	11.88	10.60*	-11
Sales and related	10.6	9.2*	18.37	15.52*	-16
Office and administrative support.....	16.2	16.0	16.78	15.12*	-10
Farming, fishing, and forestry.....	0.3	0.1*	11.70	13.67*	17
Construction and extraction	3.8	3.2*	21.94	19.00*	-13
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.5*	21.35	20.03*	-6
Production	6.6	9.3*	16.79	15.28*	-9
Transportation and material moving.....	6.8	10.4*	16.28	14.42*	-11

¹ A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Chattanooga is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

* The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See [table 1.](#)) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area, above average concentrations of employment were found in some of the occupations within the transportation and material moving group. For instance, first-line supervisors of helpers, laborers, and material movers, hand were employed at 2.2 times the national rate in Chattanooga, and heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, at 1.7 times the U.S. average. On the contrary, hand packers and packagers had a location quotient of 1.0 in Chattanooga, indicating that this particular occupation's local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development.

OES wage and employment data for the 22 major occupational groups in the Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area were compared to their respective national averages based on statistical significance testing. Only those occupations with wages or employment shares above or below the national wage or share after testing for significance at the 90-percent confidence level meet the criteria.

NOTE: A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands are also surveyed, but their data are not included in the national estimates. OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 sampled establishments in May and November each year for a 3-year period. May 2013 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected in May 2013, November 2012, May 2012, November 2011, May 2011, and November 2010. The overall national response rate for the six panels is 75.3 percent based on establishments and 71.6 percent based on employment. The sample in the Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area included 2,639 establishments with a response rate of 77 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The OES survey provides estimates of employment and hourly and annual wages for wage and salary workers in 22 major occupational groups and 821 detailed occupations for the nation, states, metropolitan statistical areas, metropolitan divisions, and nonmetropolitan areas. In addition, employment and wage estimates for 94 minor groups and 458 broad occupations are available in the national data. OES data by state and metropolitan/nonmetropolitan area are available from www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcst.htm and www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcma.htm, respectively.

The May 2013 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/soc and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm.

Area definitions

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **Chattanooga, Tenn. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Hamilton, Marion, Sequatchie

Counties of Tennessee and Catoosa, Dade, and Walker Counties of Georgia.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/southeast. Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm. Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/oes/2013/may/methods_statement.pdf. Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request – Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 800-877-8339.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2013

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	23,650	1.5	\$14.42	\$30,000
First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand	620	2.2	18.86	39,220
First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material-Moving Machine and Vehicle Operators	390	1.1	24.01	49,940
Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	290	1.1	11.33	23,560
Bus Drivers, School or Special Client	660	0.8	9.56	19,880
Driver/Sales Workers	1,020	1.5	13.00	27,040
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	4,650	1.7	18.50	38,480
Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	⁽⁵⁾	⁽⁵⁾	13.85	28,810
Taxi Drivers and Chauffeurs	80	0.3	10.95	22,780
Motor Vehicle Operators, All Other	160	1.5	15.55	32,340
Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels	⁽⁵⁾	⁽⁵⁾	29.25	60,840
Parking Lot Attendants	90	0.4	9.69	20,150
Automotive and Watercraft Service Attendants	240	1.2	9.09	18,910
Traffic Technicians	40	3.3	19.26	40,070
Transportation Workers, All Other	70	1.0	11.90	24,750
Conveyor Operators and Tenders	40	0.6	14.39	29,940
Crane and Tower Operators	130	1.8	18.93	39,370
Excavating and Loading Machine and Dragline Operators	100	1.3	19.12	39,760
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	900	1.0	14.70	30,570
Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment	460	0.9	10.45	21,730
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	4,620	1.2	12.46	25,910
Machine Feeders and Offbearers	90	0.5	14.89	30,980
Packers and Packagers, Hand	1,150	1.0	9.48	19,710
Refuse and Recyclable Material Collectors	200	1.0	10.17	21,140

⁽¹⁾ For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in Chattanooga, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_16860.htm.

⁽²⁾ Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

⁽³⁾ The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

⁽⁴⁾ Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a 'year-round, full-time' hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

⁽⁵⁾ Estimate not released.